GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
ABSTRACT

Public Services – Andhra Pradesh Forest Department – Disciplinary proceedings initiated against Sri V. Ramesh, Forest Range Officer (Retired) under Rule 20 of APCS (CC&A) Rules, 1991 and two others who are responsible for Government loss of Rs.8,87,000/- sustained due to illegal quarrying – Imposing a penalty of 3% cut in pension for a period of two years besides recovery of Rs. 2,21,750/- - Orders – Issued.

ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY (SEC.IV) DEPARTMENT

G.O.MS.No. 17 Dated: 18-03-2021

Read the following:

1) From the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (HoFF), A.P., Guntur, Lr.Rc.No.33145/2011/A&DC-2, dt.21.10.2019.
2) Memo. No.3455/Sec.IV/A1/2019, EFS&T(Sec.IV) Dept., dated 03.09.2020.
3) From the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & HoFF, A.P., Guntur, Lr. Rc. No.33145/2011/A&DC-2, dt.18.11.2020.
4) Letter No.3455/Sec.IV/A1/2019, EFS&T(Sec.IV) Dept., dated 02.02.2021.
5) From the Secretary, APPSC, Lr. No. 94/DC&C/2021, dated 08.03.2021.

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ORDER**:**

In the letter 1st read above, the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (HoFF), A.P., Guntur has informed that Articles of Charges were issued to Sri V. Ramesh, Forest Range Officer, Kurupam Range of Vizianagaram Division of Visakhapatnam Circle by the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (HoFF), under Rule 20 of A.P.C.S. (CC & A) Rules, 1991 vide PCCF Ref.no.33145/2011/P1, dated 20.08.2013, on the following counts:-

Article-I:"That he had neglected his legitimate duties in allowing illegal quarry in Reserve Forest area J.K.Block of Kurupam Range, in violation to the provisions of F.C. Act, 1980".

Article-II:"That he had shown gross negligence of his legitimate duties in irregular recommendation for felling of trees in patta lands in Saluru Mandal".

Article-III:" That he had shown gross negligence of his legitimate duties in non-selection of planting area failed to take timely works in Biyyalavasa VSS and mislead the superiors".

Article-IV:"That he had shown gross negligence of his legitimate duties, shown indifferent attitude which resulted in irregularities, improper execution of various works a belated submission of muster rolls for payment under MGNREG Scheme".

2. The Charged Officer acknowledged the articles of charge on 06.11.2013 and submitted his written defence statement on 12.11.2013. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (HoFF), Andhra Pradesh appointed the Conservator of Forests, Visakhapatnam as Inquiry Officer and the Divisional Forest Officer, Vizianagaram as Presenting Officer. The Inquiry Officer completed the enquiry and submitted the findings in Rc.no.2175/2011/M8, dated 25.10.2017, wherein he has concluded that,

Article-I:"The quarrying area which was arrived as per GIS layers was cross checked by the present Divisional Forest Officer, Vizianagaram and confirmed that the quarry pits are fallen inside the Compartment No.61 of J.K.Block as per the Arc-view layers. Hence, the charge against the Charged Officer is **proved.**

Article-II:"The issue of wrong assessment of Pasi tree growth in the enumeration list prepared by the lower staff was arose at the time of calculation of standing tree growth for assessment of approximate yield for the (26) no., of Pasi trees in the patta land. The tree growth was re-assessed and ratified at the initial stage of the issue of felling permission. Hence, the charge against the Charged Officer is **not proved.**"

Article-III:"The plantation target was achieved as per the instructions of the higher officers during the same financial year by altering the planting area. Hence, the charge against the Charged Officer is **not proved.**"

Article-IV:"The Charged Officer has not taken proper steps to settle the payments within the time limit as per the NREGS Act. Hence, the charge against the Charged Officer is held **proved.**"

3. The findings of the Inquiry Officer were communicated to the Charged Officer vide Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (HoFF) Ref.no.33145/2011/A&DC-1, dated 07.11.2017 for submission of further defence. The Charged Officer submitted his further defence on 15.11.2017. After examining the further defence statement of the Charged Officer, findings and connected records, the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests(HoFF) had called for certain information from the Chief Conservator of Forests, Visakhapatnam vide letter Ref.No.33145/2011/A&DC-1, dated 22.11.2017.

4. In compliance to the above, the Chief Conservator of Forests, Visakhapatnam vide letter Rc.no.2175/2011/M8, dated 12.12.2017 submitted the latest status of quarry and financial implications due to illegal quarrying in the Forest Area. The same was examined by the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (HoFF) and he ordered in Ref.no.33145/2011/A&DC-1,dated 07.01.2018, for de-novo enquiry, since all the (3) Field Officers (i.e., Forest Range Officer, Forest Section Officer & Forest Beat Officer) were responsible for a sum of Rs. 8,87,000/- towards Government loss sustained due to illegal quarrying.

5. Accordingly the Inquiry Officer & Chief Conservator of Forests, Visakhapatnam has completed further (de-novo) enquiry and submitted his findings along-with connected records vide Rc.no.2175/2011/M8 dated 19.11.2018, wherein the Inquiry Officer has concluded that,

Article –I:	"The quarrying area which was arrive as per GIS layers was cross checked by the present Divisional Forest Officer, Vizianagaram and confirmed that the quarry pits are fallen inside the Compartment No.61 of J.K.Block as per the Arc-view layers and the loss sustained to the Government also has to be recovered from the Charged Officer as per apportioned amount to him. Hence the charge against the Charged Officer is **proved.**"
Article –II:	"The issue of wrong assessment of Pasi tree growth in the enumeration list prepared by the lower staff was arose at the time of calculation of standing tree growth for assessment of approximate yield for the (26) no., of Pasi trees in the patta land. The tree growth was re-assessed and ratified at the initial stage of the issue before issue of felling permission. Hence, the charge against the Charged Officer is **not proved**."
Article –III:	"The plantation target was achieved as per the instructions of the higher officers during the same financial year by altering the planting area. Hence, the charge against the Charged Officer is **not proved**.
Article –IV:	"The Charged Officer has not taken proper steps to settle the payments within the time limit as per the NREGS Act. Hence, the charge against the Charged Officer is **held proved.**"

6. The findings of the Inquiry Officer were communicated to the Charged Officer in the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests(HoFF) in Ref.no.33145/2011/A&DC-2 dated 12.02.2019. The Charged Officer acknowledged the Final Notice on 14.03.2019 and submitted his further defence statement on 15.03.2019, wherein there are no valid/reasonable points.

7. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (HoFF) has informed that as per the check-slip information, the loss sustained to Government is Rs.8,87,000/- as per the actual measurement of new pit. The loss has been apportioned among all the Charged Officers i.e., Forest Range Officer, Forest Section Officer and Forest Beat Officer. In respect of Sri V. Ramesh, FRO(Retd.), 25% of his share towards the loss sustained to Government is Rs.2,21,750/- .

8. The disciplinary proceedings are continued under Rule-9 of Andhra Pradesh Revised Pension rules, 1980, as the charged officer has retired from Government service on attaining the age of superannuation on 31.12.2017.

9. After careful examination of the matter, it has been provisionally decided to impose a penalty of "3% (three percent) cut in pension for a period of two years besides recovery of Rs.2,21,750/-" against Sri V. Ramesh, Forest Range Officer (Retd.), and to issue a show-cause notice to the charged officer, under Rule-9 of A.P. Revised Pension Rules, 1980.

10. In the Memo.2nd read above, while intimating the above provisional decision of the Government, Sri V. Ramesh, Forest Range Officer(Retd) has been directed to submit his representation, if any, on the provisional decision of the Government.

11. In the letter 3rd read above, the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & HoFF, Andhra Pradesh has informed that the Charged Officer has submitted his further defence statement, dated 30.09.2020, requesting to drop further action against him. The same has been examined and it has been decided to confirm the above provisional decision as the charged officer did not submit any new/fresh points to consider his request.

12. In the letter 4th read above, the Secretary, A.P. Public Service Commission has been requested to place the above proposal of the Government before the Commission and communicate its concurrence for taking further action in the matter.

13. In the letter 5th read above, the Secretary, Andhra Pradesh Public Service Commission, has informed that the Commission has agreed with the proposal of the Government, to impose a penalty of "3% cut in pension for a period of two (2) years besides recovery of Rs.2,21,750/- against Sri V. Ramesh, Forest Range Officer (Retd.)

14. After careful examination of the entire matter, Government hereby order to impose a penalty of 3% (three percent) cut in pension for a period of (2) two years besides recovery of Rs.2,21,750/-(Rupees Two Lakh Twenty One Thousand, Seven Hundred and Fifty only) on Sri V. Ramesh, Forest Range Officer (Retd), formerly Kurupam Range of Vizianagaram Division of Visakhapatnam Circle, for the charges held proved against him.

15. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests(HoFF), A.P. Guntur shall take necessary action accordingly.

(BY ORDER AND IN THE NAME OF THE GOVERNOR OF ANDHRA PRADESH)

VIJAY KUMAR G. SRKR
SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT

To
Sri V. Ramesh, Forest Range Officer (Retd.), formerly Kurupam Range of Vizianagaram Division of Visakhapatnam Circle through Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & HoFF, Andhra Pradesh, Guntur.
The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & HoFF, Andhra Pradesh, Guntur.
Copy to:
The Accountant General (A&E), Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad.
The Director of Treasuries & Accounts, Ibrahimpatnam, Vijayawada.
The Secretary, A.P. Public Service Commission, Vijayawada.
The PS to M (Energy, EFS & T).
The Secretary to Vigilance Commissioner, A.P. Vigilance Commission, A.P. Secretariat, Velagapudi.
The PS to the Secretary to Government, EFS & T Department.
SF/SC.

//FORWARDED :: BY ORDER//

SECTION OFFICER